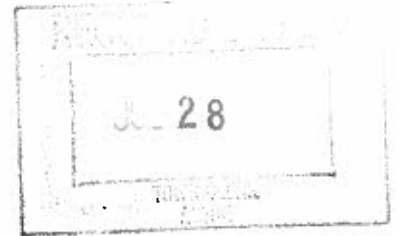


**Historic District Commission Minutes 6.15.09**  
**Room 126, Acton Town Hall**



Present: Michaela Moran (MM), Ellie Halsey (EH), Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), David Honn (DH), Terra Friedrichs (TF). Observers: Bonnie Geither, Volunteer Coordinating Committee, Anne Forbes, member of the public

Meeting called to order 7:40 PM by MM.

WAVE (application 0906)

MM began drafting COA, findings in process. TF asked if the HDC had any jurisdiction over tree canopy- could HDC request that as much of the trees in back parking be retained? TF expressed concerns over project size, massing and impact on town character, and questioned whether a project this size, under one owner, is allowable under current Village zoning. DH asked whether it would be built in one or more phases- MM responded that ideally it would be done at once, but will probably be phased.

MM noted that for discussion will be breaking down the application in terms of parking, site and elevation, massing and detail, including plantings where applicable. Move from general to specifics. MM felt that as a whole, the WAVE project preserves the buildings and retains a village feel. Moving to specifics, starting with the "yellow" house at 535-537 Massachusetts Ave., MM felt overall massing, disposition of openings on facades as is acceptable- the major concern is the "link," railings and handicapped ramp. DH questioned whether ramping could be done differently. All three (links, doors, ramps) need further discussion and review. MM noted that railings in general need more detailed drawings; link to barn and blue house also problematic. KAB also noted the links and doors problematic and present as such a dated, 1970's design solution not compatible with the district. KAB would also like more details on door to the theater- might be too much glass- hard to tell. TF felt overall there is too much glass; the facades are too flat, too modern, out of character for the village. Felt "garage" entrance facing east especially damaging to village aesthetics. DH suggested that dormers could be moved and separated, fenestration moved around so not everything is aligned on the garage doors. Ramp and railing details need to be discussed. However, DH felt that overall the massing okay, reflects the connection between public and more private, connection between the theater and street. Porch adds energy, provides shelter if raining, gives shade and space for performances, and has clear hierarchy of uses, public to private. Feels scale is appropriate to mixed use, overall disposition of facades reflect desired uses. Call out links and doors- problematic, perhaps the most problematic aspect of the application. TF still feels there is too much glass, wants to be sure porches and gable, especially fascia, are deep enough and not "fake" looking, and must blend with other West Acton architecture nearby. MM called out all doors, links, handicapped ramps and railings on COA as needing further design before approval for those components.

## Conditions for approval of the Application for Certificate of Appropriateness #0906

### Finding:

1. The adaptive reuse of the buildings along Mass. Ave is a creative and holistic approach to retaining our village feel yet incorporating the retail spaces necessary for revitalization and development of the village.
2. The overall design concept presented needs some interpretation of the zoning by law and the village plan as it relates to this design.
3. Overall massing, disposition of the openings and facades of 535-537 Mass Ave is acceptable. Items for further discussion include the details of the handicapped ramp and the link.
4. Overall massing, disposition and facades of 525-531 Mass Ave. reflects the desired hierarchy of public and private spaces. More details of the doors and planters, gables and porches, and link detail is to be determined.
5. The eastern façade will be very visible from Mass Ave. without tree screening. With the planned screening, about half of the building will be visible. The ramp, while required, will be discussed with other railing details.

### Conditions:

1. Window on the west side of the 535-537 Massachusetts Ave. attic level shall match existing 2 over 2 windows as in plan of June 1, 2009 (exhibit a).
2. The details of the 'links' between the 525-531 Mass Ave and between the portions of 535-537 Mass. Ave. will be taken up at a later meeting.
3. Hand rail system on the walkways and stair cases to be taken up at a later meeting.
4. All the materials and specific details of trim, siding, and windows and doors etc. to be taken up at a later meeting.

EH made motion to approve with noted conditions and findings, KAB seconded, KAB, MM, EH, DH voted to approve as noted, TF voted not to approve. Motion passed 4-1 and was accepted. MM to send certificate to applicants.

83 River Street (application 0912)

MM will be discussing issue of violative garage doors with Nina Pickering Cook, Anderson Krieger.

37 Windsor Ave.

MM made a motion to issue a Certificate of Non-Applicability, finding that it was a replacement in kind; KAB seconded. TF recused herself from the vote; all others present voted to approve.

278-280 Arlington Street (application 0903)

MM moved to deny without prejudice due to lack of information/incomplete application. EH seconded, all voted to deny without prejudice.

49 Windsor Ave. (application 0916)

MM noted application received.

14-20 School Street (application 0907)

Applicant Steve Su discussed two issues- desire to put in a second door on the School Street facade, as recommended by the Building Department and the unapproved vinyl windows that were installed without a certificate. Windows were discussed first. Mr. Su presented an estimate of \$15,000 to replace the existing, violative windows with wood windows. He suggested painting the vinyl windows, and adding a wood grill, and repairing the remaining windows as needed. Repairs are estimated at \$1500. He stated that he did not want to replace the vinyl windows that were recently installed. The applicant also stated that he did not reside at the property- it was purchased at a foreclosure auction as an income property. Mr. Su estimated that there are 13 windows visible on School Street. MM said HDC needed to consider issue and matter would be taken up at the next meeting, July 6 at 8:30 PM. EH noted that the HDC would need more details for the door application- the name of the contractor performing the work, building plan and detailed drawings including door location and trim. MM noted preference for a wooden door. DH recommended looking at the door and windows at 76 School Street for examples.

508 Main Street (application 0910)

The applicants returned for input on a permanent Basketball Hoop they hoped to install. MM and EH asked applicants to consider a temporary hoop, which they declined, stating that they did not like its appearance and that it was bulky and took up too much driveway space. The applicants noted that it attaches with four bolts and so could be easily dismantled in the future. MM noted that the proposed backboard was clear; and that with shrubbery screening it, it would be minimally visible from Main Street. MM made a motion to approve the application (0910), KAB seconded, with the condition that the backboard be clear, as proposed, and that screening shrubs be planted so that it would be minimally visible from Main Street. All voted unanimously to approve. MM also noted that abutters would need to be notified; if there were no objections a certificate would be issued after the waiting period.

14 Newtown Road (application #0911b)

Presentation by applicant's architect Chris Dalmus (CD). Scope of proposed project includes restoring wrap-around porch, with removal of in fall, bringing back original window, demolish chimney, bring back original nine light door and shutters. Will also restore paint colors to original (noting that paint color outside of HDC

jurisdiction.) Would like to paint using three-four colors, following original scheme. Will rebuild storm windows in wood, use half-round gutter replacement and probably add to barn and west side of house, but would need to consult with arborist first to make sure trees not damaged by this change. Barn has been changed in the 1960's and 1970's. Will change eave pitch on barn- eave detail on barn will match house. Dominant materials will be clapboard and shiplap board. In south, to rear, will take existing deck down and bring up grade by about two feet. There will be a guard rail opposite deck, but visible from the street. Considering cedar shingles for the roof. MM noted the edges of the cupola slant upwards, and asked reason. CD will provide further details. CD also noted that some partial demolition would need to take place on the upper second story, which would then be rebuilt; same with the upper story of barn. KAB expressed concern with shape of opening to barn, since arches did not appear elsewhere on the house. Applicant offered examples of arches on other Acton barns, specifically on corner of Prospect and Central, and an additional barn on Main Street. EH and TF both favorable about arched doors. TF, DH, KAB and MM commented on level of detail, thought and preparation of the application overall. MM expressed concern over possible removal of chimney as the HDC has not allowed other properties to remove chimneys. Need to go back to earlier approvals to see under what conditions, if any, chimney demolition was allowed. Applicants stated that chimney was a "deal breaker" for them- if not allowed to demolish it they would need to rethink the project, and perhaps not do all that had been outlined earlier. CD noted that the project still left one chimney- the chimney for proposed demolition did not contribute aesthetically, and that it was unclear if original, as bricks differed from the other chimney. MM noted that bricks were often replaced and chimneys rebuilt- it could still be an original feature, and that the HDC needed to make a careful and considered study of the issue. EH to send out abutter notices; no ruling until chimney issues resolved.

541 Massachusetts Ave. (application 0911A)

Applicant Amanda Sullivan presented a revised design. MM moved that pending verification that application conformed to zoning, abutter notification and other regulatory issues, the application be approved, with the condition that it conform with zoning and HDC regulations. MM noted that the application needed to be stamped by the Town Clerk. EH to send abutter notices. DH noted that lighting proposed looked appropriate and to scale. MM noted that lighting would be bracketed. MM made motion to approve- voting unanimous.

111-113 School Street

DH recused himself as an abutter. MM noted that former HDC chair Brian Bendig had responded to the applicant before his resignation and had not received a response. The application is incomplete, and rejected without prejudice due to this. MM to send letter, approved by TF, KAB, MM and EH.

MM noted that Annual BOS Oversight meeting has been scheduled for June 22, 2009.

Meeting adjourned 12:20 AM. MM moved, KAB seconded.

Minutes respectfully submitted by KAB 7/27/09.

KAB  
7/27/09